

## Birth of the Royal Heir (Isaiah 9.1-6)

### 1. Background

#### a. Chapter 7

- i. A Political crisis: Pekah, king of Israel forges an alliance with Rezin, king of Amram to attack Ahaz, king of Judah
- ii. A child as a sign: the child called “Immanuel” indicates that God has not forsaken his people, he is with us, and by the time the child is old enough to reject bad and choose good, the lands of both Pekah and Rezin will be deserted.

#### b. Chapter 8

- i. Another child, Isaiah’s son, as a sign: “Maher-shalal-hash-baz” means “quick spoils; speedy plunder,” which is a description of what Assyria will do to Aram and Israel. “For before the child knows how to call his father or mother by name, the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried off by the king of Assyria” (Isaiah 8.4).
- ii. A second prophecy: because Judah rejected God as her protector and melted with fear before Pekah (scornfully called, “Remaliah’s son”) and Rezin the wave of Assyrian destruction will flow down like a river to invade even Judah.
- iii. An exhortation: don’t fear this people or be intimidated when they falsely accuse you, fear Yahweh of hosts who should be regarded as holy. He is your sanctuary but to those who reject him he is a rock that causes them to stumble. Isaiah and his disciples are to wait for Yahweh even though he is now hiding his face from the house of Jacob.
- iv. The people have consulted “mediums and the spiritists who chirp and mutter (incantations)” rather than God. They will be destitute and starving but instead of turning to God they will become enraged and curse both their king and God.

### 2. Darkness in Galilee (Isaiah 8.21-9:1)

- a. Conquered: In 732 BC Tiglath-Pileser conquered Damascus (the capital of Aram) putting Rezin to death (2 Kings 16.9). Shortly thereafter, he defeated Samaria (the capital of Israel). “The land of Zebulun and Naphtali” were in the northern portion of Israel—no doubt among the first to melt in fear before the Assyrian army. The northern half of Israel was deported at this time (2 Kings 15.29). Even so, the lower half of Israel (the land surrounding Samaria) managed to remain intact for a dozen years or so until c. 721 BC when Shalmaneser (king of Assyria) again attacked the capital, Samaria, and deported all of the people and settled Gentiles from

Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sephar-vaim into the region (2 Kings 17).

- b. Deported: The people from all the land of Naphtali were deported to another land and foreigners/Gentiles settled the land. Even so, some Jews remained in this Galilean region and to them it was a dark time.

### 3. The Victory

#### a. Isaiah 9.2

- i. A bright light suddenly shines in on the dark land. A hint of restoration is mentioned, perhaps a return to the “old days” when she dwelt in security under her own king.

#### b. Isaiah 9.3

- i. Joy of harvest [a picture of bounty for the farmer]
- ii. Joy of dividing the spoil [a picture of bounty for the soldier]

#### c. Isaiah 9.4

- i. Ever wear a back pack for a long time and then take it off?
- ii. Yoke, Rod, Staff are broken
- iii. As in the day of Midian
  - 1. Story of Gideon (Judges 6-8)
    - a. The Midianite oppression (Judges 6.1-6)
    - b. The call of Gideon (Judges 6.11-16)
    - c. When the battle was about to happen Gideon sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali (Judges 6.33-35)
    - d. Midian had an innumerable number of soldiers
    - e. Gideon 32,000 -> if anyone is afraid let him leave
    - f. 22,000 left leaving 10,000 -> down to the water
    - g. 9,700 drank with their hands while 300 lapped the water like dogs
    - h. Weapons were (1) horn (2) jar (3) torch
    - i. The Midianites were startled and killed each other

#### d. Isaiah 9.5

- i. No more war
  - 1. Boots making no more noise
  - 2. Garments rolled in blood
  - 3. if even the warriors boot and outer garment are destroyed then certainly the swords, bows, and other weapons are gone as well (cf. Isaiah 2.4).

### 4. The child is not so much a sign as the means of deliverance **Isaiah 9.6**

- a. A child is/was/will be born (tense)

- i. NET: The prophet takes his rhetorical stance in the future age of restoration and describes future events as if they have already occurred.
- b. Government upon his shoulder
  - i. He is no mere puppet king of another world empire like Hoshea or Herod but he actually bears the government on his shoulder.
- c. Wonderful counselor or Extraordinary Strategist
  - i. NET: Here it probably refers to the king's ability to devise military strategy, as suggested by the context (cf. vv. 3-4 and the following title אֵל גִּבּוֹר, 'el gibor).
- d. Mighty God or God-Warrior
  - i. BDB: “אֵל גִּבּוֹר *mighty hero or divine hero* (as reflecting the divine majesty) Is 9<sup>6</sup>”
  - ii. NAB: “God-Hero: a warrior and a defender of his people, like God himself.
  - iii. **Judges 6:12** “The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.”
  - iv. NET: “the title portrays the king as God's representative on the battlefield, whom God empowers in a supernatural way... this sense seems more likely in the original context of the prophecy. They would suggest that having read the NT, we might in retrospect interpret this title as indicating the coming king's deity, but it is unlikely that Isaiah or his audience would have understood the title in such a bold way. Psa 45:6 addresses the Davidic king as “God” because he ruled and fought as God's representative on earth. ...Isa 9:6 probably envisions a similar kind of response when friends and foes alike look at the Davidic king in full battle regalia. When the king's enemies oppose him on the battlefield, they are, as it were, fighting against God himself.”
  - v. **Psalm 45.1-7**;
- e. Everlasting father or Father of the Age
  - i. NET: ...in its original context the title pictures the king as the protector of his people. For a similar use of “father” ...This figurative, idiomatic use of “father” is not limited to the Bible. [but is also found in other archeological discovers of pagan nations contemporary with Isaiah].
  - ii. **Isaiah 22.20-21** “20 “Then it will come about in that day, That I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, And I will clothe him with your tunic And tie your sash securely about him. I will entrust him with your authority, And he will

become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.”

iii. **Job 29.16** "I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know.”

f. Prince of peace

i. **Zechariah 9:10** I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

g. No end to the increase of his government

i. It continues to grow and will never shrink.

ii. The stone in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream not only crushes all the kingdoms of the world but it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2.35

h. No end to peace

i. No more war—remember v5? (cf. Isaiah 2.4)

i. Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to found it

i. 1 Chronicles 17.11-15

j. To establish it [davidic kingdom] in judgment and righteousness

i. Isaiah 11.1-5

k. From now and forever

i. Daniel 2.44; 7.13-14, 18, 27

l. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this

i. This is no self proclaimed Messiah who by his own military genius and prowess is able to wrest from the nations his ancestral land in order to establish a kingdom for himself. Rather, God himself underwrites this son of David so that what this Messiah succeeds in doing can rightly be called an accomplishment of Yahweh of hosts.

5. Jesus

a. Lukan birth narrative (Luke 2.1-20)

b. **Matthew 4.12-17**: Jesus set Capernaum as his base for his itinerant ministry of preaching the kingdom from town to town—Capernaum is in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, the people who dwelt in darkness were the first to hear Jesus’ kingdom message.